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BRILLIANT

OCEANIA TO GET ENTRY

SOCCER'S world governing body FIFA is considering changing its World Cup qualification rules to allow the Oceania champion direct access though probably not in time for 2002, a top official said in Sydney at the weekend.

Under the current rules, the Oceania winner has to play off against a side which failed to make it through from its own confederation.

But FIFA general-secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen told the Sydney-based Daily Telegraph on Saturday that FIFA were planning to change the rule.

"The situation whereby Oceania have to play off against another federation is illogical," he said.

"As a separate confederation, Oceania should have a guaranteed spot in every FIFA competition."

The country most likely to benefit from the proposed rule change is Australia.

The Socceroos lost out to Scotland (1990), Argentina (1994) and Iran (1998) for a

place in the World Cup after winning the Oceania division.

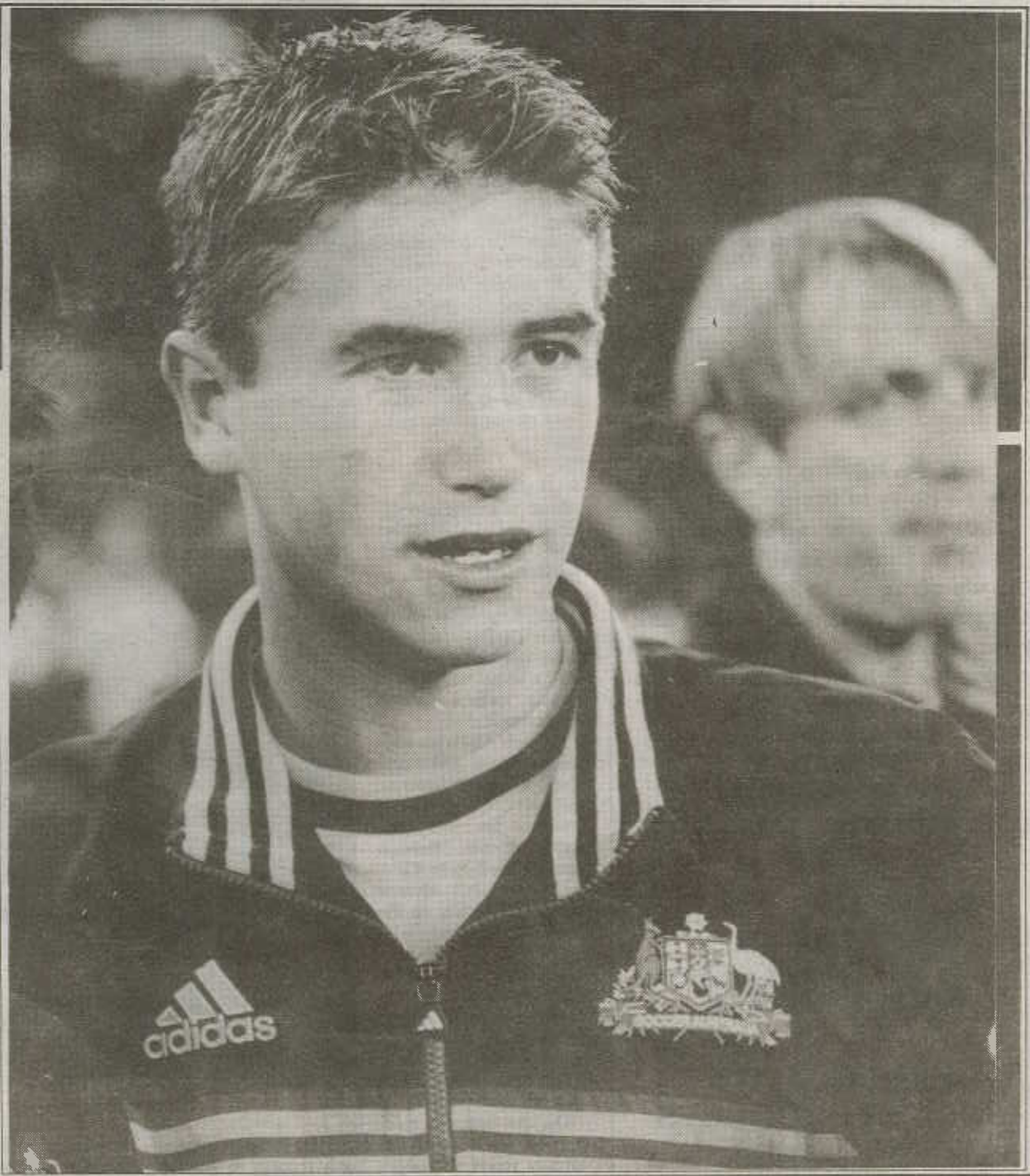
Zen-Ruffinen said FIFA now felt it was time Oceania's winner had direct entry to the sport's most prestigious event.

"We have begun working on the Oceania problem. I am quite optimistic that we will find a solution soon," he said.

"However, it won't necessarily happen in the 2002 World Cup. The chances are only 50-50."

Despite the FIFA official's confidence the Swiss based administration will face stiff opposition from Europe, Asia and South America if it attempts to lessen their entry base. Asian officials have threatened to boycott the next World Cup over FIFA's decision to have the Oceania winner play against South America, effectively taking away the extra half place which had been promised to them.

And in a move clearly aimed at making FIFA acknowledge their growing influence the Asians have suggested that they will nominate their own candidate to run against FIFA president Sepp Blatter.



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Blatter confirms FIFA interest in African World

FIFA head Sepp Blatter has advised Africa to endorse a single bidder to stage the 2006 World Cup finals on the continent for the first time.

"If one candidate applies, the chances will be better than two, even if there is strong competition from Germany, England and Brazil," he has said.

South Africa and Morocco are the only two African countries still promoting their bids.

Egypt, Ghana and Nigeria have pulled out, Nigeria last month declaring support for South Africa.

Blatter, who has said the event should go to an African country if it can meet the ruling body's strict criteria on infrastructure, telecommunications and transport, was in Cairo for a meeting of the Confed-

eration of African Football (CAF).

CAF President Issa Hayatou received the Moroccan and South African bids on Sunday but did not endorse either.

"All I can say is we have realistic ambitions of holding the World Cup in 2006 in Africa," he told Reuters.

All bids have to be with FIFA by the end of July.

The decision on where the finals will be held in 2006 will be taken by FIFA's 24-man executive committee in March next year.

And South African officials have pledged to leave a legacy for underdeveloped African soccer and rescue the World Cup from its predictable winners, when they revealed their proposals to host the tournament in 2006.

"We have waited 100 years. It is Africa's turn in

2006. We cannot wait any longer," Danny Jordaan, chief executive of South Africa's bid committee, told a press conference in Cairo.

Africa will have been the only major FIFA confederation that has yet to host the tournament after the next World Cup finals co-hosted by Japan and South Korea in 2002.

Jordaan said his delegation had presented its proposals to the African Football Confederation (CAF) here Sunday in the hope that it will help Africa's cause by taking a stand behind its bid or a rival one from Morocco.

This may still happen, he suggested.

Other contenders to land the 2006 event are England, Germany and Brazil, who have all hosted the tournament before.

In pushing South Africa's case, Jordaan said

the South African Football Federation would, if it were awarded the cup, contribute \$US2 million (\$A3.05 million) to kick-start a CAF trust that would ensure the development of soccer in Africa. It would also offer a share of any surplus from the tournament, Jordaan said.

"We understand the World Cup is a multi-billion dollar business. But it must be a business with a social conscience. It must leave a legacy," Jordaan said.

If South Africa (or Morocco) staged the World Cup, it would generate millions of dollars of revenues for other African countries through contributions from FIFA and through advance warm-up matches on the continent, he said.

Despite outstanding players and teams which have competed at top levels African soccer, reflecting the continent's poverty, suffers from lack of medical, technical and other financial support.

On the business side, he said, South Africa has already received pledges of corporate sponsorship amounting to one billion rand (\$A244 million) and would generate much more if it were awarded the competition.

All of the stadiums are operational, Jordaan said, in apparent reference to Morocco, which said it would have to build new stadiums for the event.



FIFA supremo Sepp Blatter: favours the bids from South Africa and Morocco

South Africa, emerging only recently as a democratic country of different races, offers the World Cup a way of ensuring the universality of the sport for the next century, he said.

South Africa will submit its final written bid to FIFA well before the July 31 deadline, Jordaan said.

And the CAF has con-

firmed the status of the bids from Africa.

South Africa and Morocco have both submitted bids to the African Soccer Confederation (CAF) stage the 2006 World Cup, the confederation's chief executive said.

"I received the nomination bids from South Africa and Morocco in an executive session of

the CAF and I can say we have realistic ambitions of holding the World Cup in 2006 in Africa," Issa Hayatou said.

Irvin Khoza, chairman of the South African bid committee, said his group had told CAF executives it was able to meet all of FIFA's criteria regarding telecommunications, security and infrastructure. Morocco, which has

twice unsuccessfully bid for the World Cup, said they were continuing their bid. There were rumours they would drop out of the race.

"We are here to say that Morocco is mobilised for its candidacy and we have behind us everyone from the king to the man on the street," said Driss Benhima, head of the Moroccan bidding team.

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Denilson advises Vieri to keep his head

BRAZILIAN midfielder Denilson has advised Christian Vieri to try to stay calm despite inheriting the tag of the world's most expensive player.

The Italian international striker was transferred from Lazio to Inter Milan on Wednesday in a deal worth \$50 million.

Denilson had held the previous record when he moved from Sao Paulo to Real Betis for \$35 million.

"I'm no longer the most expensive player in the world and that makes me a little more relaxed. Now that responsibility is on Vieri's shoulders," Denilson said.

"Vieri is an experienced player but he'll need to keep his head because the burden of the responsibility is very tough."

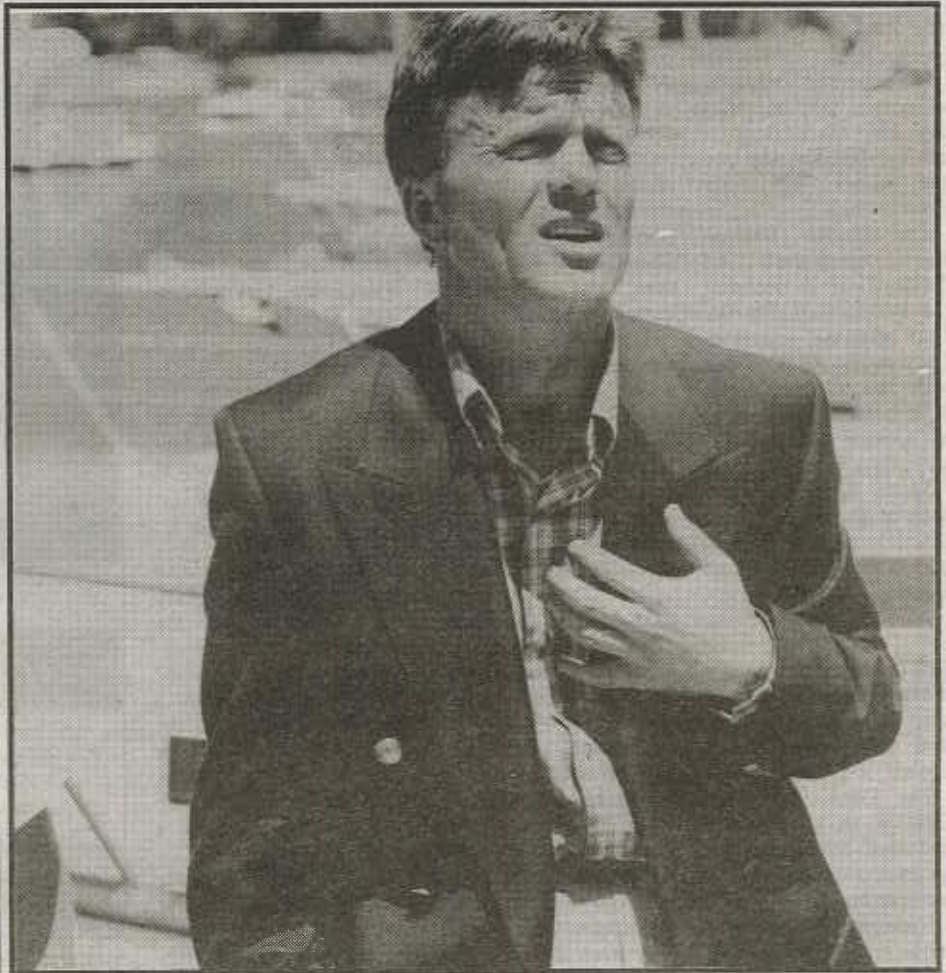
"If you are going to a new club and don't start scoring goals quickly then the pressure soon starts to rise,"

Denilson added.

The Brazilian international joined the Betis squad after the World Cup last season but made a poor start to his career in Seville and blamed the pressure the price tag had put on him.

He went several months without finding the net but in the second half of the season started to recapture the form he showed when playing in his native Brazil.

Olympic ends speculation



SYDNEY Olympic has killed speculation that Branko Culina would move on as coach after issuing a statement last week confirming that he would see out the second of his two year contracted term.

NO ROOM FOR GENTLEMEN LIKE JO

By Simon Buckland

FORMER Australian national coach Jozef Venglos appears living proof that being the perfect gentleman can only take you so far in the harsh world of modern football management.

The Slovakian's vast global experience in the game commanded respect on his appointment in July last year, but from the outset there was scepticism about his age.

Now 63, Venglos' finest hour was as coach of Czechoslovakia when they lifted the European Championships in 1976 and much was made of his unhappy brief spell at Aston Villa

at the start of the decade.

After a mere 11 months the doubters will rest their case with Celtic having finished the season trophyless by a Rangers domestic Treble and with two dismal European exits.

Venglos, however, is staying at Parkhead as the club's European scout, but only after what history will view as a miserable campaign, with his short stay as Celtic head coach likely to be remembered as a failure.

The bare statistics back that assertion, but it should also be noted that few, if any Celtic supporters, have been heard calling for Venglos' dismissal recognising he has been dealt an unfair hand by circumstances.

Romario's toilet humour not funny says striker

BRAZILIAN strikers Romario and Edmundo, who could be team mates at the Copa America next month, are at odds over a lavatory door.

Romario, who owns a theme bar in a Rio suburb favoured by the city's middle class, has had a cartoon of Edmundo painted on the door of one of the toilets and is refusing to remove it even though the former Fiorentina striker finds it offensive.

Edmundo said today that he did not see the funny side of the cartoon, which features

him alongside a former girlfriend.

"It depicts me with a person who does not bring me good memories," said the volatile striker, who returned to Rio de Janeiro's Vasco da Gama last month after an unhappy 18 months in Italy with Fiorentina and is now married to another woman.

The two players were on opposite sides when Edmundo's Vasco da Gama beat Romario's Flamengo 2-0 to win the second stage of the Rio de Janeiro championship,

Edmundo scoring both the goals.

Romario has already been in hot water over the toilet doors.

Mario Zagallo, Brazil's coach at the last World Cup, took out a court order to force Romario to remove a cartoon which depicted him sitting on a lavatory with his trousers around his ankles.

Romario was axed from the Brazil squad on the eve of the competition with a calf injury but claimed all along he would have recovered in time to play.



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Norway and Estonia join Scots

NORWAY and Estonia have joined Scotland as the Fair Play teams to earn berths in this year's UEFA Cup competition.

The two countries were drawn from among eight national soccer associations - which obtained the minimum seasonal average of 8.0 required to qualify - during the halftime interval in the Euro 2000 qualifying match between Switzerland and Italy in Lausanne.

Scotland, the winner of the UEFA Fair Play competition and with a seasonal average of 8.223, had automatically clinched an additional place in the UEFA Cup competition.

The UEFA Cup berths will go to the teams earning the Fair Play award in their domestic top division, which means Scottish winner Kilmarnock FC, Norway's Bodo Glimt (ranked fifth in their division) and Tulevik Viljandi of Estonia (ranked third) will claim the reward.

England, Ukraine, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Germany, the other national associations that averaged eight points or more, will split a cash prize of 150,000 Swiss francs (about \$A153,000) to be spent on fair play purposes.

The King is Dead: Long Live The King

The King is dead. Long live the King.

Manchester United supporters will be praying that Mark Bosnich can comfortably step into the shoes of Peter Schmeichel.

The Danish international retired from Old Trafford after securing the Premiership, the FA Cup and the European Champions' Cup - but will the former Aston Villa number one be able to recreate Schmeichel's glory days?

Inside Soccer takes a look at the areas where Bosnich must be at his best to emulate the Great Dane.

SHOT STOPPING:

Schmeichel rarely seemed perturbed by any kind of strike - either low, high, powerful or distant.

The Dane looked at ease in most situations and could reach as low as he could high despite his massive frame.

Bosnich has more agility as a slighter man and can pull off the incredible when it is required.

STATURE:

Schmeichel was an imposing figure to both his defence and opposition strikers.

The 'star-shape' save he perfected as attackers closed in on goal put the striker under immediate pressure in one-on-one situations - more often than not, Schmeichel came out the winner.

Bosnich does not have the same physical presence, being three inches smaller and three stones lighter than the Dane.

But the Australian has the ability to unnerve attackers by covering his goal well and racing to the ball when necessary.

COMMUNICATION:

There was no better communicator around his own box than Schmeichel.

Constantly talking and invariably screaming - at his defenders.

The Dane was always aware of where the major threats came from around the area and organised his troops with the artistry even an army general would admire.

Although talkative, Bosnich had players such

Gareth Southgate and Ugo Ehiogu doing the marshalling as well.

DISTRIBUTION:

Both goalkeepers have the amazing ability of reaching the halfway line with a throw which means the supply line to Ryan Giggs, David Beckham, Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole will still be strong.

But the question remains: Will Bosnich be able to spot the man running into space as well as his predecessor could?

TEMPERAMENT:

Schmeichel always had the aura of a man totally in control and bar the regular incidents involving Ian Wright remained composed throughout a game. Occasionally, the Dane's cool exterior dropped and in an FA Cup tie against Charlton he was dismissed for a reckless challenge.

But Bosnich is a totally different animal.

His infamous Nazi-style salute to the Tottenham fans was just the tip of a disciplinary iceberg which needs to be thawed



under Alex Ferguson.

POSITIONING:

Schmeichel lapsed in this area on occasions.

The most notable time was in the European

Champions' League group game in Munich when Schmeichel cost United a goal which could have led to worse.

However, the Dane would gloss over his own

mistakes by bellowing at his defenders as though the incident was their fault, and normal service was resumed immediately.

Bosnich's strength lies

in covering his goal.

Villa have been grateful to him on a number of occasions in the last seven years for his ability to cover ground around the goalline.

Maloney takes out 1999 Warren Medal

By Ted Simmons

MARCONI captain Brad Maloney has beaten a number of strong challenges to win the Warren Medal as the national soccer league Players Player of the Year.

Maloney had been outstanding for the club, driving them to the play-offs after the team had seemed out of the running midway through the season.

Among his challengers were Sydney United youngster and Under 20 international Mile Sterjovski who was named as the Under 21 Player of the Year.

United scored a second national award when coach David Mitchell won the top honour from former Socceroos Graham Arnold (Northern Spirit) and Ange Postecoglou (South Melbourne) and Perth's Bernd Stange.

Mitchell, in his second season with United, again built up a strong squad after losing most of his players from the



1999 Warren Medal winner Brad Maloney

previous season, to win the premiership.

However, the players faltered under the power of defending Ericsson

Cup champion South Melbourne to lose the Grand Final.

Souths keeper Michael Petkovic was a barrier to

the United attack and his consistent performances earned him the Keeper of the Year award.

Simon Micallef won the

referee award and John Bowdler the assistant referee while Adelaide City was judged the Fair Play team of the year.

NSL 1999 AWARDS LIST

Warren Medal Players Player of the Year: Brad Maloney (Marconi)

Papasavas Under 21 Player of the Year:

Mile Sterjovski (Sydney United)

Coach of the Year:

David Mitchell (Sydney United)

Goalkeeper:

Michael Petkovic (South Melbourne)

Referee:

Simon Micallef

Asst Referee:

John Bowdler

National Youth North Player of the Year:

Simon Catanzaro (NSWIS)

National Youth South Player of the Year:

Andrew Mashoian (South Melbourne)

Fair Play:

Adelaide City

Ansett Goalscorer:

Pablo Cardozo (Sydney Olympic)

Ted Too

THE outstanding soccer media award for the year went to Ted Simmons whose by-line regularly appears in *Inside Soccer*.

Next April the popular journalist celebrates 50 years as a soccer reporter and has covered nearly every major event in Australian soccer in that time.

Bash the waiter: go to jail

TWO players on Thailand's national soccer squad have received one month suspended jail sentences and been fined 1,500 baht (\$A61) each after pleading guilty to beating a waiter.

The Nation newspaper reported that originally stiffer penalties considered for Dusit Chalermchai and Thawatchai Damrongongtrakul were halved by the judge, who took their guilty pleas and clean records into account.

The pair and a third defendant, Phiphop Rattandilok, who does not play for Thailand, followed a waiter to his apartment after having an argument with him at a nightclub over a bag of missing fruit.

Soccer officials have described the incident as "not serious" and said the men were heavily drunk.

Fan shot dead

A 21-year-old man was shot dead after violence erupted in cities throughout Argentina following the 4-0 thrashing of champion soccer club Boca Juniors by first division rival Independiente.

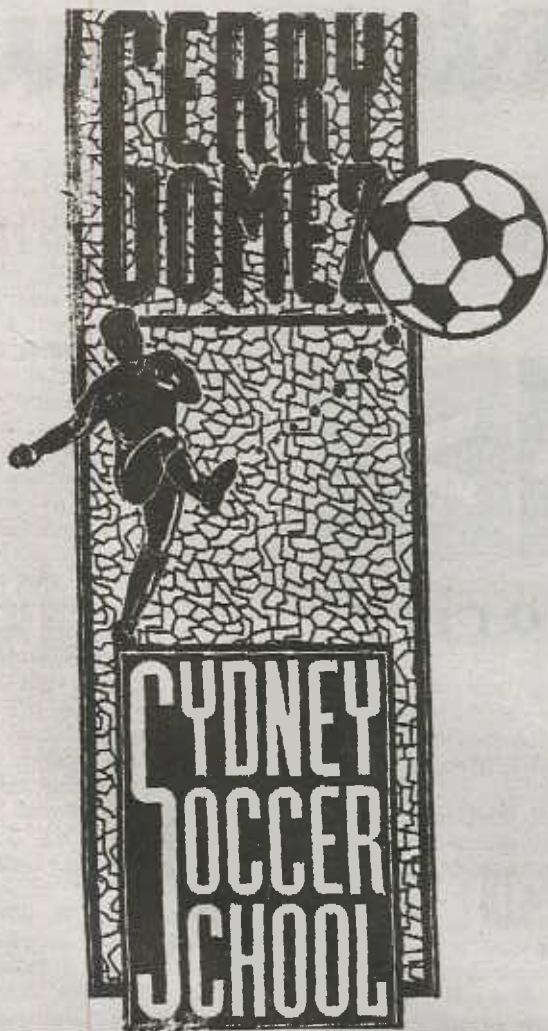
Antonio Santillan was shot in the face as fighting broke out between rival groups in the railway station at Avellaneda, just outside the capital Buenos Aires, following the match. Another youth was shot in the foot in similar scenes of violence in the seaside town of Mar del Plata some 400km from the capital.

Three people including two police officers were seriously injured and 30 people were arrested. Rampaging fans also threw stones, smashed shop windows and looted while 1,000km away in the western region of Mendoza a further 103 people were arrested by police.



IT'S OURS: The Vidmar brothers, Aurelio and Tony, celebrate their FIFA win with John Aloisi and skipper Alex Tobin.

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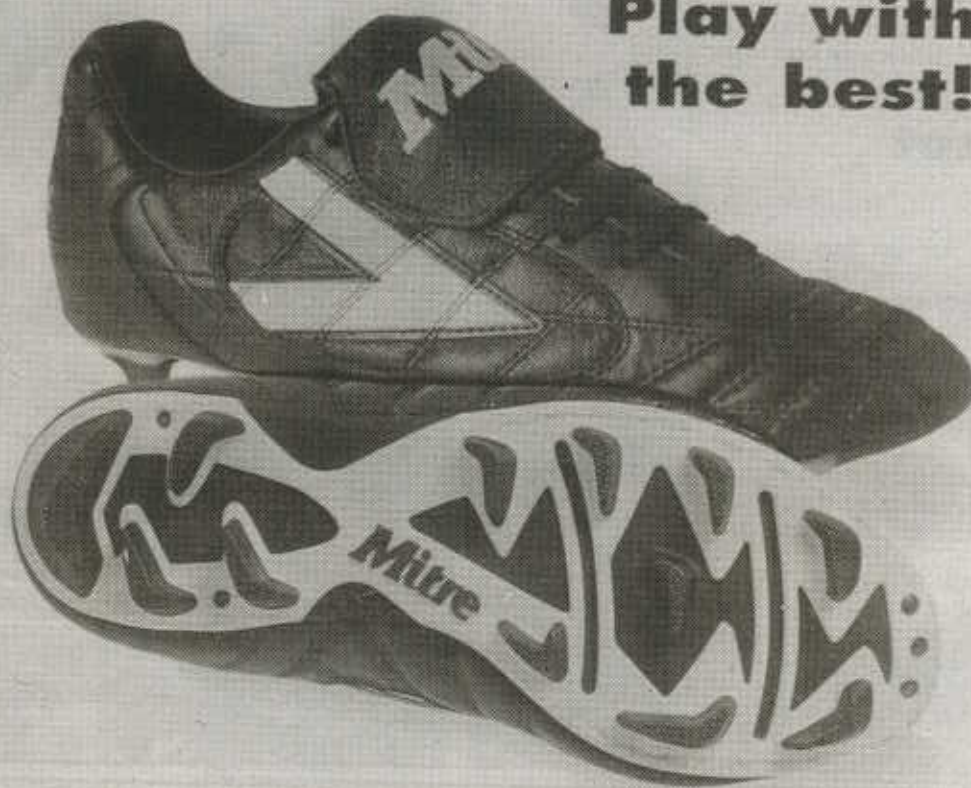
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Bruce Campbell

IT'S ONLY AN OPINION

MY good friend Joe Watson recently spoke to me about tradition.

He is 100% right, I am a traditionalist and like to see the history of the game maintained.

I also like to see players honoured.

I know that sometimes people forget what the original reason for their interest in football was, I never do.

I am a fan, plain and simple.

I couldn't give a stuff about the politics involved in the game, I couldn't give a toss about the sensitivities of this official or that official and I frankly don't give a jot about whether people like me or my writing.

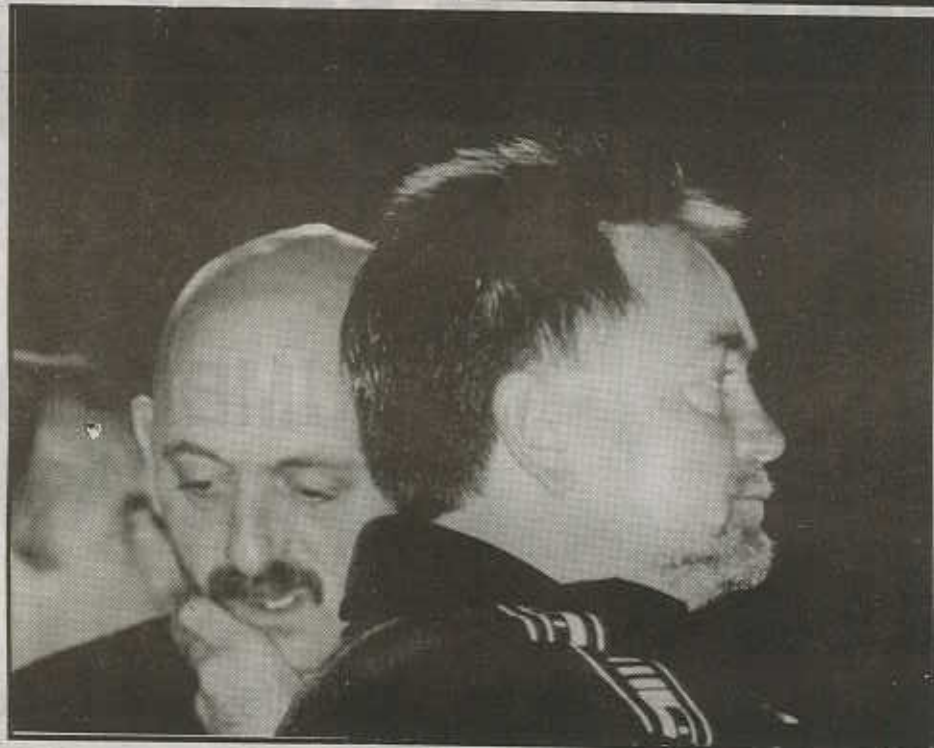
Don't get me wrong, it hurts like hell when someone has a shot at me – but I am a big boy, and I can take it.

It also hurts when someone says to me that my writing sucks.

Or it used to, now that I have gotten over my insecurity I couldn't give a toss about that either.

The reason isn't any arrogance or lack of humility.

I am sensitive to the pleas of others, but I am just a football fan.



Jinky Joe: a legend

That is my main role in life, the rest is just something I do between watching games.

Football, and the players, is what it is all about.

So congratulations to all those who were honoured at the recent ASF awards night.

Once again pressure of

deadlines, and a new paper in the offing, kept me from attending.

But Jinky Joe, one of the game's gentlemen, brought up a good point.

Why didn't the games stars of yesterday get an invite?

I couldn't really answer that

one and it isn't my intention to have a shot at those who organised the evening.

It's always difficult when you have to make up an invite list for any function.

Joe also recalled when he was presented with a plaque for having played 30 full in-

ternationals for Australia.

He was dead chuffed.

But it seems that he was the first to be so honoured and is the last – the award apparently has never been made again.

We are on the right track with the recent Hall of Fame but the game has still got a long, long way to go.

It was sad to hear that Ray Richards, one of the greats, sent his citation back.

It seems that he was less than impressed with the way it was all done and the fact that the 74 Socceroos were only given pieces of paper.

It does sound a bit hollow and I can understand his anger and frustration.

Having had to wait a quarter of a century you would have thought that we could finally get it right.

I'd like to see a table of former stars at every function the ASF ever puts on – at least.

I would rather talk to a great than a club official – but then that is just an opinion.

I'd like to thank everyone who has been a part of the revolution called Inside Soccer.

Together we have made this the best little soccer paper ever.

Others have looked on and wondered how we have done it and I can confess that I have wondered too.

What is the secret ingredient?

I don't really know but what I do know is that with your magnificent support we have achieved what we have set out to do.

Sadly, it is time for me to put my pen away, at least as far as Inside Soccer goes.

This issue marks the last production under the banner of Duntroon Publishing.

We may yet be involved with the paper's production over the next few weeks, that is up to the new owners, JAD Sports.

As I say I have had a great time and consider myself fortunate to have edited this paper as well as Australian Soccer Weekly, Champion Soccer and Simply Soccer over the last few years – that in itself is a wee bit of a record.

I have also enjoyed fantastic relationships with many NSL clubs who I have edited club magazines for.

But time moves on and with Inside Soccer being sold to new owners, who I wish the very best of luck to, it is time to kick start my own career in another direction.

Soccer will always be part of my life and I am sure that I will continue to share the highs and lows of the game with you all.

Once again, thanks for your support – see you at the next World Cup finals with the Socceroos.

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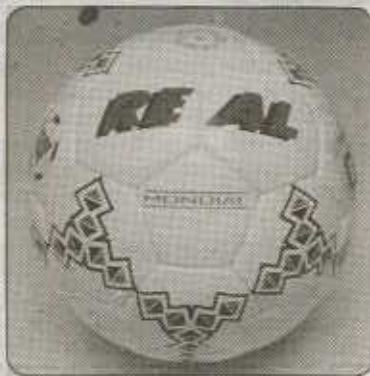
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LEAGUE REVERT TO GOAL DIFFERENCE

THE English Football League has voted to revert to goal difference rather than goals scored to separate teams next season.

The League has also voted to introduce players' names and squad numbers on shirts, following the lead of the Premiership.

Using goals scored in the Nationwide League had caused some controversy and at their AGM at the Carden Park Hotel, near Chester, on Saturday the League decided to revert to goal difference.

The change comes too late to help Bury, who were relegated to the Second Division on goals scored.

They finished level on points with Port Vale and if goal difference had applied the Potteries club would have gone down instead.

League spokesman Peter Rowe explained that members felt goals scored had not produced the attacking football hoped for when it was introduced.

"The League has voted to replace goals scored with goal difference, which brings us back in line with the Premier League and UEFA," he said.

"When goals scored was brought in it was seen as a way of encouraging attacking football.

"But the statistics show it



Kevin Muscat: Aussie at First Division Wolves

has not really made any difference at all. Of all the relegation and promotion issues last season, Bury's relegation from the First Division is the only one which would have been different."

About the shirts issue, Rowe added: "As from next season all the clubs will be using squad names and numbers a la Premier League and that was universally approved by all the clubs.

"A lot of people watch the Premier League and then when they watch the Football

League they notice differences like that.

"It's an opportunity for the League to develop a higher degree of brand awareness.

"It also gives clubs the marketing opportunity to develop local heroes, like Lee Hughes at West Brom."

In a third move, the League has fallen into the line with the Premiership, Football Association and UEFA over substitutes and from next season teams will be able to use three of five players on the bench.

Gazza could be Keegans' hope

ENGLAND manager Kevin Keegan has told Paul Gascoigne that the door to the national team could still be open if he can get himself back in shape.

"The onus is on Paul Gascoigne to force me to put him in," Keegan was quoted as saying in Sunday newspapers.

The Sunday People quoted him as saying: "I'm hoping, the same as others, that this summer Gazza will do enough to make himself available for England next season."

England, who have drawn their last two European championship qualifiers and are facing a tough challenge to reach the play-offs, are in desperate need of a quality midfielder.

Middlesbrough's Gascoigne

was once his country's bright hope in that position but has struggled with fitness and drinking problems and was dropped for the 1998 World Cup.

He has barely played in the premier league since Christmas and has looked sluggish on the field.

Keegan said it was going to be tough to find a creative force like Gascoigne was in his prime, a man who could conjure a goal out of nothing or change the flow of a game.

"I am not being unkind to the midfield players I have got. We have some good young players," he said.

"But they do not have those sort of strengths. That is the reason why we are talking about Paul Gascoigne now."

INSIDE SOCCER soccer's weekly

Bosnich deflects arrest questions

By Andrew Dent

MANCHESTER United's new Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich faced reporters after arriving in Sydney last week for the first time since he was arrested in England after an alleged robbery, but refused to talk about the incident.

Bosnich, in Sydney for Australia's match against a FIFA world team, fronted a news conference eager for details about an incident which took place outside a Birmingham lap-dancing club on the eve of his wedding.

Bosnich's new United club will hope he can divert shots at goal as easily as he deflected questions from the only journalist who ignored instructions not to ask about the arrest.

Asked if he had enjoyed his wedding, Bosnich said simply "yes", before flicking back the

question to a radio reporter with a ring on his finger.

"I think the circumstances were different," replied the reporter.

"What? You got married to a girl, didn't you?" asked the Australian goalkeeper.

Bosnich preferred to talk about his new career at "arguably the world's biggest club" and his future with the Australian team, stressing that as far as he was concerned the two were not mutually exclusive.

Bosnich returned to United from Aston Villa in a four-year deal estimated to be worth one million pounds (\$1.60 million) a year in wages, plus a bonus of around two million pounds (\$3.20 million) as a signing-on fee spread over the length of his contract.

He said a number of factors had contributed to his deci-

sion to move to Old Trafford rather than Italy's Serie A.

"The first reason was I still felt I hadn't achieved everything I wanted to achieve in England," Bosnich said.

"Secondly, when arguably the biggest club in the world comes calling, if you're worth your salt as a professional footballer, you want to take up that challenge.

"And also the challenge of seeing whether I'm good enough to follow Peter Schmeichel - perhaps the biggest challenge."

Bosnich was among the big attractions in last Saturday's Australia - World XI clash, which was part of the opening ceremony for the new Olympic Stadium.

He said he hoped that representing Australia would not be a hampered by club calls. Australia may have to play up to 16 games, eight against South American opposition, to reach the 2002 World Cup finals, but it is a task Bosnich said he would gladly take on.

"The prize of playing in the World Cup and what it could do for Australian soccer far outweighs any sacrifice that might have to be made," he said.

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Brazil Club Host

BRAZIL has been selected to host the inaugural World Club Championship, FIFA president Sepp Blatter has announced.

Expected to pit the champions of the six continental federations, the tournament has been set for January 5-14, but some clubs, especially the Europeans, have expressed concern over placing the tournament in the middle of their league seasons. The European Champions Cup winner will be the invitee from Europe, but if it refuses, the runner-up may go instead.

Brown not placing importance on warm-up results

The Australian Matildas lost their final World Cup warm-up match to Canada 2-0 on Saturday after Canadian women's soccer stars, Andrea Neil and Charmaine Hooper, both scored in the second half.

Canada, which lost 3-1 to Australia on Wednesday, have finished their six warm-up games scoring 12 goals and conceding 11.

The shutout, on the heels of three straight defeats, was its third in the six games, having beaten Mexico twice.

Neil, a second-half substitute who was coming off a hamstring injury, stole the ball from Sarah Cooper and scored from 25metres out to give Canada a 2-0 lead in the 55th minute, chipping the ball behind startled Australian keeper Belinda Kitching.

Hooper, a constant force for Canada, opened the scoring from a penalty in the 47th minute.

Australia's Matildas had broken through for the first

win of their women's soccer World Cup preparation with a 3-1 victory over Canada three days before.

Coach Greg Brown hailed the performance as an improved effort after a 4-0 loss to Olympic champion the US and a 3-1 defeat to Brazil.

Midfielder Sharon Black provided the spark and scored two goals for the Matildas who led 2-1 at halftime.

Last Monday saw Brazil beat Australia 3-1 in a hard-fought match.

Julie Murray scored Australia's goal with a header to help her team to 1-1 at halftime but lack of finishing cost the Matildas dearly.

Pretinha scored twice for Brazil and her second second goal, a breakaway shot lofted over Australian keeper Belinda Kitching in the 71st minute, put the game out of reach.

Australian coach Greg Brown has not placed importance on the results of his warm-up games, preferring to work out the final team to play in

the Cup.

"Results are not important. It's a matter of functioning and getting things right," he said.

"We've just about settled down and the players are training quite well although we've had some minor injuries as well as a few problems with the match balls."

Lisa Casagrande, Sharon Black and Dianne Alagich were all on the injured list and missed the earlier game against the United States which the Matildas lost 4-0.

Brazil kicks off the World Cup tournament against Mexico on June 19. Australia faces Ghana on June 20.

Ticket sales indicate that the general public is already interested in the tournament.

Sales are at 425,000 and increasing daily, clearly spilling beyond just hard-core soccer fans.

Media credential requests hit 2,000 in late May.

About 16,000 tickets have been sold for Spartan Sta-



dium's June 19 opener between Canada and Japan and more than 65,000 have been sold for the US opener at the

Meadowlands in New Jersey on the same day.

More than 25,000 tickets have already been sold for the

Stanford semifinal on July 4 and as the US heads toward that date, ticket sales are expected to soar.

GREGORY'S FINAL SNUB TO AUSSIE BOSNICH

MARK Bosnich reckoned he deserved better after seven years top service. But he walked out of Aston Villa before flying home to Australia without even a handshake, a word of thanks or a good luck message from boss John Gregory.

Gregory started the cold shoulder treatment when he booted Bosnich off the team bus before Villa travelled to play Manchester United six weeks ago - and he snubbed him right to the last when the amiable keeper packed up his possessions for the final time as the season finished.

And that's left Alex Ferguson's new keeper hurt and disappointed after helping Villa to two Wembley League Cup Final wins - one against United - in his eventful days in the Midlands.

Just hours after agreeing a four-year package to replace Peter Schmeichel - worth an estimated £8 million in a Bosman-style free transfer - Bosnich revealed that Gregory has blanked him ever since dropping the Australian star in April two days before

Villa's Premiership game with United at Old Trafford.

"I don't bear any grudges at all," says Bosnich. "But John Gregory hasn't spoken a word to me since before the United game. That's a disappointment considering the time I spent at Villa and the fact that I didn't lead them on."

"But I understand everyone has their own job to do and they have to look after their own interests. Because I was open and honest at the start of the season I've left myself open to attacks from all sides."

"At the start of the season I was asked a direct question by the chairman Doug Ellis about resigning for Villa. I told him I was sorry and that I wasn't going to lie to him, but I was going to wait until the end of the season and I stuck by that."

"At the end of the day I've got to look at myself in the mirror and I know I can."

Bosnich could say more - and you get the feeling he'd like to hammer Gregory for a stance that appears childish and

petty.

But Bosnich is honouring a pledge he made to the scores of Villa fans who wrote to him as the stand-off between himself and Gregory became increasingly acrimonious.

"Towards the end it became obvious Villa didn't want me to stay. A lot of supporters were resigned to the fact that I would be leaving mainly because of Villa's actions."

"I had a big mailbag and the general theme was that if I had to leave then do it with dignity. I've tried to do that and I think I have."

Gregory's reaction shouldn't be a huge surprise to Bosnich after the way he exploded in anger when Dwight Yorke announced he was heading to Old Trafford last summer.

The Villa boss claimed if he'd had a gun at the time he'd have shot Yorke for wanting to leave the club!

But Bosnich isn't dwelling on Villa's sour reaction to him leaving after seven years service.

"You have to let go of any bitterness otherwise it will tear you apart," he

said.

Instead, Bosnich will focus on succeeding the legendary Schmeichel at United - even though the whispers persist that he was third choice behind Dutchman Edwin van der Saar from Ajax and Monaco's French World Cup keeper Fabian Barthez.

United supremo Martin Edwards fiercely dismisses that suggestion - but, conversely, Alex Ferguson wasn't the only one vying for Bosnich either.

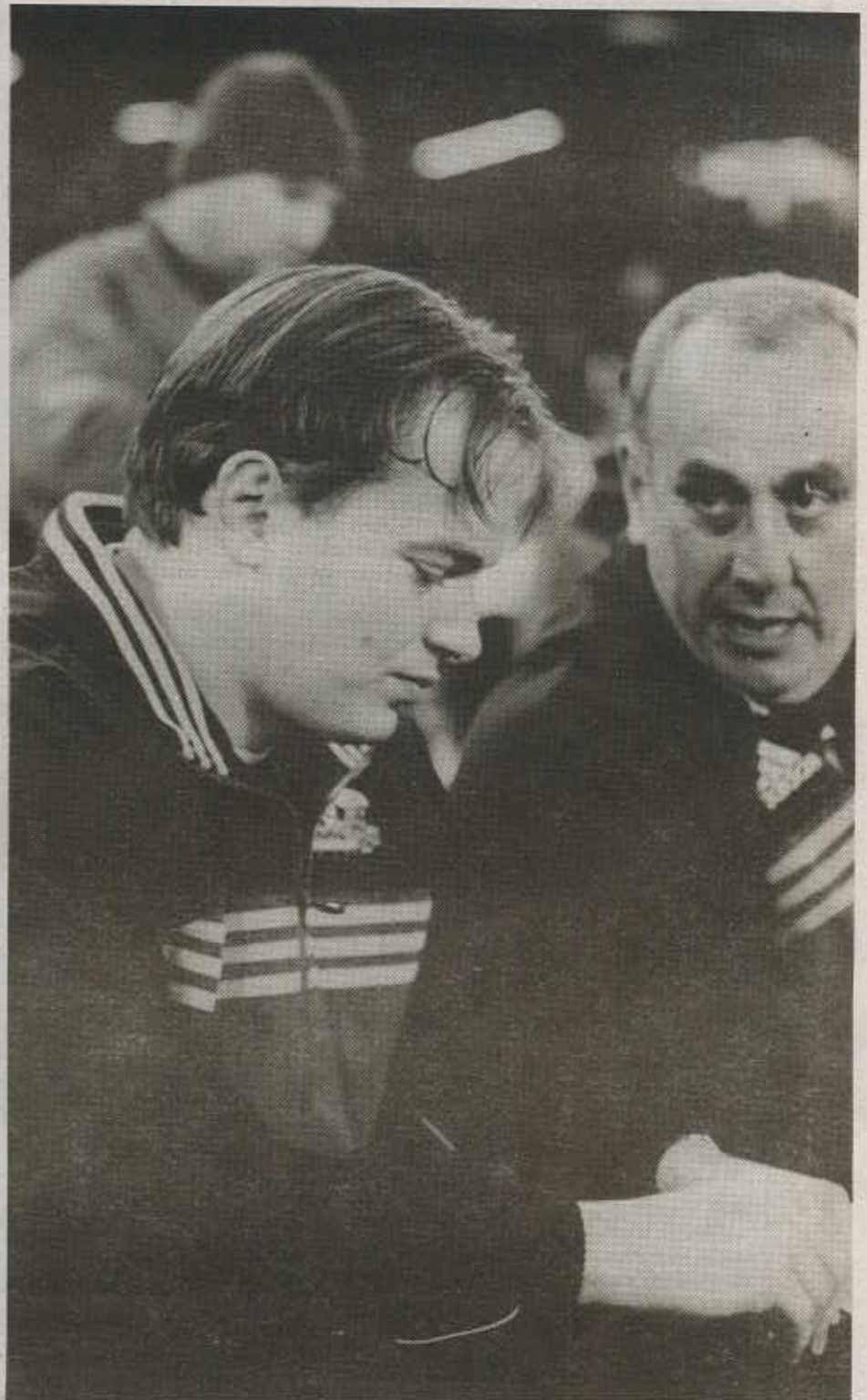
He could easily have followed Angelo Peruzzi at Juventus or joined Roma or Real Madrid.

Juventus have now signed Van der Saar for £6million, but Bosnich says: "I was the first choice with some of the clubs that have been mentioned."

"I know because I'd already been to see them. But I didn't want to be sat somewhere in Italy or Spain, looking at myself in the mirror and knowing I'd shirked the challenge of following Schmeichel."

"That means everything to me."





By John Salvado

THE centrepiece of what will be the the biggest event ever held in Australia, the Sydney Olympics, was officially opened On Saturday night with a celebration of the world game.

The best Australian soccer side ever assembled took on a World Allstars lineup before a record crowd for a soccer match in Australia of 88,101 at Stadium Australia.

The Socceroos side included new Manchester United goalkeeper Mark Bosnich, Leeds striker Harry Kewell and Fiorentina sweeper Paul Okon, while the world's most expensive player, Christian Vieri, lined up for the World XI.

For Vieri it was a homecoming of sorts, as he spent many of his formative years down the road with Marconi juniors before his family moved back to Italy.

The pre-game spectacular included performances from INXS, with guest frontman Terence Trent D'Arby, and Men at Work, with Wendy Matthews belting out the national anthem.

Trent D'Arby dedicated a song to INXS's former lead singer, Michael Hutchence, in the band's first performance since his death two years ago.

To some observers, it seemed strange that the \$690 million venue was being officially opened three months after playing host to 104,583 rugby league fans at the season-opening NRL double header.

Since then there have been more league games and a Bee Gees concert attended by 63,000.

But the official ceremony was held back for tonight, which also marked the first time an Olympic sport had been played in Australia's biggest and most expensive stadium.

In many ways the crowd of all ages and countless nationalities was a forerunner of what Sydney can expect at the Olympics next year.

Ralph and Joan Stilgoe, from the southern Sydney suburb of Cronulla, have no particular interest in soccer but were determined to be here.

"We're going to be volunteers at the Olympics next year, but this was one event we were always going to pay to see, to say we were there when the stadium opened," said Ralph Stilgoe.

For Japanese soccer fan Shige Komori, it was the chance to see some of the world's best players that convinced him to come along.

"But I also wanted to see the stadium," said the English language student who has only been in Sydney for four weeks.

"It's so modern and just enormous, so much bigger than anything we have in Japan."

Inside the stadium, fans wore a hundred different soccer strips from Chile to Chelsea, from Barnsley to Brazil, with the obligatory swag of Manchester United red and an encouragingly large number of gold and green Socceroos jerseys.

Olympics minister Michael Knight got the job of officially declaring open the 110,000-seat venue which will host athletics, the men's soccer final and the opening and closing ceremonies at next year's Games.

Alongside him on the podium was prime minister John Howard, who will be doing the honours when the Olympic flame is lit on September 15, 2000.

Although it was indisputably soccer's night, ceremony organisers were careful to pay homage to Australia's other sporting passions, with Mark Taylor, Betty Cuthbert, Murray Rose and Louise Sauvage among the big names introduced to the crowd.

Huge blow-up balls bearing the logos of the NRL, the AFL and the Australian Rugby Union surrounded a four-storey high globe, which burst open to reveal a soccer ball.

After the torrential rain for Wednesday's State of Origin match, organisers were blessed with a fine, clear evening on what SOCOG hopes will be a precursor for the real thing in little over a year's time.

AND the Socceroos took on the world tonight *writes Doug Conway* - and won. World class performances from Ned Zelic, Harry Kewell and Stan Lazaridis piloted Australia to a 3-2 victory over a FIFA All-Star team that included the world's costliest player, Christian Vieri.

The Socceroos came from a goal behind at half-time, completing a fairy-tale finale to officially christen Sydney's Olympic Stadium before 88,000 fans.

If Kewell and Lazaridis dominated the first half, then the second belonged to Zelic.

The second period was barely a minute old when the German-based midfielder unleashed a 25 metre drive that had Mexican goalkeeper Jorge Campos clutching at thin air and the net behind him bulging.

Twelve minutes later Zelic chipped a perfectly weighted pass that allowed substitute Brett Emerton to score with his first touch.

The Olyroo skipper chested the ball down and tucked his shot under Campos to put the Socceroos ahead for the first time.

The home team extended its lead when Chilean Javier Margas put Kevin Muscat's cut-back into his own net after a move again instigated by the inventive Zelic.

Campos, a second-half substitute who arrived in Sydney just eight hours before the kick-off, was again left to pick the ball out of the net.

Frenchman Bernard Lama had no such problems in the first half, when the Socceroos dominated but could not make their ascendancy count.

In fact they trailed to Swiss midfielder Murat Yakin's early headed goal from a corner, when the Australian defence went to sleep and gave goalkeeper Mark Bosnich no chance.

Bosnich, fresh from signing a contract with Manchester United, did not have a serious save to make but could only stand with hands on hips as Yakin's header left him stranded.

New Zealand veteran Wynton Rufer made the scoreline more respectable for the world team when his left-foot shot from an acute angle minutes from the end beat Australian substitute goalkeeper Zjelko Kalac at the near post.

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AUSTRALIA v THE WORLD

Vieri: the kid from Sydney who went on to become the goal scoring Prince

By Ted Simmons

ITALIAN striker Christian Vieri, the world's most expensive player, earned just \$500 when he turned out for the World Eleven against the Socceroos.

Vieri was signed last week by Inter Milan for \$76 million and was one of the first to accept an invitation from the world body FIFA to come to Sydney for the game.

He certainly didn't come for the money - FIFA representative Walter Gagg revealed the World Stars received only a \$500 fee and a "gift from Soccer Australia".

The striker, who spent ten of his formative years in Sydney, will link at Inter Milan with Brazilian superstar Ronaldo in what has been hailed as the world's best strike force.

World team coach, Roy Hodgson, said that on paper, it was an unbeatable combination but they needed to bring home the Serie A title to justify their status.

Hodgson, who recently coached Inter for four matches in a caretaker role, said he thought Vieri was an excellent acquisition for the club.

"The price tag for Vieri could be considered ridiculous but then comparisons would have to be made with people in the golf world, the tennis world and not least of all what Elton John gets for a pop concert," he said.

"I think he'll do very well and will be a perfect foil and complement for Ronaldo. It's easy to say this is the best strike force in the world but it will only be the best if they can win the Italian championship.

"I'm not going to tell them how to play but will try to put them into a position where they are comfortable," Hodgson added of his team who only got together the day before the match.

"The last time I coached a FIFA team was in Japan where we lost 6-1.

But there were no crunching tackles or silly fouls in that match.



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Klinsmann farewells soccer in Sydney

By Julian Linden

FORMER German World Cup hero Juergen Klinsmann captained the FIFA All-Stars team against Australia at Saturday's official opening of the Sydney Olympic Stadium in what could well be his final ever football match.

The former Tottenham striker said he was honoured by the appointment for what he expected would be his last serious match.

"This is a great honour for me and also a great pleasure," Klinsmann said. "This will be my last game.

The 34-year-old German former captain had retired from the game after last year's disastrous World Cup tournament but turned out in May for a testimonial game in his honour.

The match was organised by his former club Stuttgart after the Ger-

man Soccer Federation denied him an official farewell.

Klinsmann, who scored 47 goals in 108 appearances for his country and was a member of the side that won the 1990 World Cup, said at the time that he was hurt by the federation's decision but that he had since got over it.

He told a Sydney news conference that he had settled well into retirement and was living in California with his wife and two-year-old son and had now agreed to help Germany's campaign to host the 2006 World Cup.

In keeping with the spirit of the exhibition match, FIFA officials approved a request to allow unlimited substitutions for the exhibition match so that both teams could give all their players a run.

"I'll just put them in positions they are comfortable with and hope



the occasion will motivate them and help them work their way through

the language barrier," said FIFA coach Roy Hodgson before the

NORMAN TAKES HIS LEAVE

By Nick Guoth

IT IS SAD to hear that Norman Kelly has decided to move on, after nearly four years in Canberra.

His commitment to soccer both for the local National League team and for his work with Soccer Canberra will be hard to match.

Voted Canberra Cosmos Supporter's Player of the Year, twice, there is no doubt about his popularity amongst the soccer fraternity in Canberra.

He was always available for the fans, especially the younger ones, to sign autographs and have a chat.

But his record with the team is one that stands out.

The seventy nine games is the current record for any player in Cosmos colours, having eclipsed Paul Dee's record during the last season.

In the 1996-97 season, Norman was also the top scorer for the club with seven goals.

Unfortunately, Kelly also holds another record in being the most suspended player.

This is not evidence of any spiteful play, but of his eagerness and devotion to the game and

Kelly was brought to Canberra by the then Cosmos coach Mike Lyons.

He had been with Lyons at Bruni.

Lyons saw a hard worker in Kelly and the partnership with Paul Wade and Lachlan Armstrong was one of the hardest tackling combinations in the league.

A past Under 21 Northern Ireland international, he had played with the likes of Raith Rovers, Dunfermline, Oldham Athletic and IFK Strömstad in Sweden.

When Paul Wade hung up his boots and left two years ago, Norman took over going out to the schools.

He was keen to help introduce soccer to the youngsters.

Last year he became the Soccer Canberra School the Soccer Canberra School Development Officer.

The job took him out to nearly all the schools in Canberra, and in doing so it provided a lot of enjoyment for both himself and those he talked and worked with.

"A lot of the school kids liked to mimic my Irish accent at the sessions," he said.

"It was all part of the fun.

as were the teachers, and there were never any major problems with the kids.

"On the odd time, some of the other Cosmos players would come out and join me, but generally I had to get away from training early."

Now Norman's 'side-kick' Yuki Onda, a player with the Capital City Suns and part of Soccer Canberra, is by his side when he meets with the kids at the schools.

Yuki's Japanese and Norman's Irish accents help to bring out the enjoyment.

Further to this Norman has also been attending a Sports Administration course and has become involved in the general administration of Soccer Canberra.

Norman feels he's learnt a lot from his work. Norman feels he's learnt a lot from his work at Soccer Canberra.

"I really enjoyed it there.

"One sees the other side of soccer having worked in administration.

"It is really much harder than most people think.

"There's a lot of work involved and full credit to them, cause they do work hard."

ily in Northern Ireland, something he hasn't done for quite a while.

Kelly is still unsure as to where his playing career will go.

"I may return to Australia to play or continue work in some administration capacity, or I may find something in the British scene.

"I have enjoyed Canberra and made a lot of friends here.

"It took a while, but after my work in the local scene as well as the Cosmos, I've noticed that the Canberra people have welcomed me."

But Norman may be back earlier than many think.

The ACT Chief Minister, Kate Carnell, has invited him back to be the voice of soccer in Canberra and to help advertise the game for the the voice of soccer in Canberra and to help advertise the game for the upcoming Olympics.

And who better to do the job?

Norman has always been the voice of Canberra soccer.

We thank Norman for all the work he's put into ACT soccer, both on and off the field and wish him all the best for the future, whether that be here in Canberra, else-

where in Australia or in another country.

Norman Kelly's Canberra Cosmos record;

95/96: 21 appearances, 2 goals

96/97: 23 appearances, 7 goals

97/98: 21 appearances, 1 goal

98/99: 14 appearances, 0 goals

NSL debut: 28/10/95, for Canberra, v Sydney Olympic (lost 2-3)

[stats: Andrew Howe]

Harry the optimist

By Ted Simmons

STRIKER Harry Kewell is optimistic Australian soccer and his English club Leeds will find an agreement allowing him to play more for the Soccerroos.

Leeds has previously been reluctant to release Kewell to Australia for matches it didn't consider important.

And the club further fell out with Australian soccer authorities by signing Aussie youngsters with British ancestry only after they'd agreed to commit their international future to

that country.

The row has left Kewell in an awkward position but he's hopeful relations between club and country were improving and he'll be seen more often in national colours.

"I enjoy coming back to play for Australia and hope that in games to come we'll be able to work something out with Leeds," Kewell said.

"One of my major ambitions is still to play for the Olyroos at the Sydney 2000 Olympics."

Kewell joined with the Soccerroo squad for training last week in front of an enthusiastic crowds of

students at St Ignatius College in northern Sydney.

The squad conducted vigorous sessions under coach Raul Blanco in preparation for the match against the FIFA World XI last Saturday night.

Kewell, who still has three years to run in his contract with Leeds, relished the opportunity to join a potent Australian attack.

"I'm looking forward to this game, particularly the opportunity to play up front with Mark Viduka and John Aloisi," he said before the important match.

Munro to look overseas for Carlton signings

By Chris Lines

CARLTON will announce four signings within a month, including international players, as it re-asserts itself as a national soccer league power following a disappointing past season.

The club's new owners promised coach Stuart Munro they were prepared to splash out on fresh signings to turn around the club's fortunes.

After making the Grand Final in their first season, the Blues slipped out of playoff contention last year - a terrible outcome for one of the league's few fully professional clubs.

clubs.

"I am looking to bring in four, five players of quality to the club and the board said they will do everything they can to back me financially," Munro said.

"They have guaranteed me this will happen, that we will try to compete in this market.

"I've already spoken to three, four players from overseas.

"Obviously I can only sign a couple but we are looking to bring in overseas players for their experience," he said.

While all clubs are keen to sign big names for their crowd-drawing ability, they cannot compete with the wages offered for older players by modest Asian leagues,

let alone those of Europe.

"To try to get a player from overseas with a profile, that people know, is going to cost you phenomenal money. You're looking at \$500,000 per year and that is average wages for those guys," he said.

Munro, a former star defender for Scottish giant Glasgow Rangers, said Australian clubs have a naive attitude toward players in their 30s, with a prevailing belief they are washed up, when they still have a lot to offer.

Northern Spirit's use of former Tottenham star Ian Crook proved there was value in signing experienced former internationals to complement

the abundant supply of talented younger players.

The coach said left-sided players and experienced strikers to guide young forwards Archie Thompson, Joe Tricarico and Alex Moreira were the obvious holes that need to be filled at Carlton.

Carlton was also chasing promising youngsters, some of whom were currently in the Olyroos team.

And Carlton Chairman, Mr Justin Madden has announced that star midfielder Marco Bresciano, has signed a prestigious four year deal with famous Italian club Empoli.

Bresciano joins former Carlton player Vince Grella at Empoli.

King Kenny is the new man in charge at MARK VIDUKA'S Celtic as they prepare to

TAKE ON THE WORLD

SCOTTISH premier league giant Celtic has appointed Kenny Dalglish as Director of Football Operations and John Barnes as head coach.

Dalglish, a former Celtic and Liverpool player who has managed Liverpool, Blackburn and Newcastle in the English premier league, and former England international Barnes, who also played most of his career for Liverpool, take up their appointments immediately.

Jozef Venglos, who led Celtic to the league title in 1998, will become the club's European technical adviser.

And Celtic legend Jimmy Johnstone welcomed Kenny Dalglish's return to Parkhead and insisted: "This is what the wonderful fans deserve."

Dalglish, known throughout his career as 'King Kenny', was finally unveiled as the club's director of football operations after months of speculation and a failed takeover attempt.

That was under former supremo Fergus McCann, but new managing director Allan MacDonald made Dalglish his first target the moment he walked through the doors at the Bhoys' impressive 60,000-seater stadium.

Dalglish was hero-worshipped by the Parkhead legions in the 1970s before departing Glasgow to fill the gap left by Germany-bound Kevin Keegan at Liverpool.



And Johnstone feels Dalglish, coupled with new supremo MacDonald, are the men to fire Celtic forward into the year 2000 and finally haul them back on a par, or even better, ahead of arch-rivals Rangers.

Johnstone said: "The bottom line is Kenny is a Celtic guy who knows all about the club - and that's exactly what is needed at Parkhead with everyone being on such a downer after we won nothing last season."

"Losing the title was

really hard to swallow, but to lose all three domestic trophies to Rangers was almost unbearable.

"Still, true to form, the Celtic fans have been marvellous, you've got to hand it to them."

"Dalglish has always loved Celtic, and the fans absolutely adore Kenny."

"They deserve something like this and they deserve to have people in charge who care about the club as much as they do."

And Johnstone believes

for the club, but Stubbs has hinted he could be set for a change of heart.

The 27-year-old had been on the verge of a move to Aston Villa last season after it became known that he wanted to be nearer his family in England, but the clubs failed to come to an agreement on a transfer fee.

Stubbs, however, will now have to wait until he reports back to training on July 1 to find out if Celtic have received or accepted any serious offers for him from England.

Stubbs said: "Right now I'm refusing to rule anything in or out."

"My position has always been to wait and see what develops over the summer before deciding my next move."

"I could return to Celtic on July 1 and be told that the club have accepted an offer for me from a Premiership club."

"Then the matter would be really out of my hands and I'd probably be off."

However, the former

Bolton Wanderers favourite has admitted the chance to work with two former Liverpool greats would be too big an opportunity for him to turn his back on.

He added: "There is another situation which isn't so clear-cut."

"If no-one comes in for me over the summer I'd return for pre-season training as a signed Celtic player - I've no way of knowing what would happen then."

"I'd be lying if I said the prospect of playing under John Barnes and Kenny Dalglish didn't appeal to me."

"They are legends in the game and their arrival shows the level of ambition currently sweeping through the club."

"Celtic have clearly set their sights on becoming a major force in European football and I would love to be part of that."

"The arrival of Kenny Dalglish and John Barnes could be the start of something massive."

"If I start pre-season training under John Barnes and things are going well, it would be a hell of a decision to walk out on it all, especially so close to the start of the season. One thing for sure is the last thing Celtic or myself need after this season is more uncertainty."

"If they haven't had an offer the club might want to sit down and talk again and see where we all stand."

PROFILE

KENNY DALGLISH

1951: Born March 4, Dalmarnock, Glasgow.

1966: Played for Scotland schoolboys.

1967: Joined Celtic on provisional contract.

1968: Turned professional. Loaned by Celtic to Cumbernauld United.

1969: Made first-team debut for Celtic.

1971: Won first Scotland cap.

1977: Transferred to Liverpool for £440,000.

1979: Footballer of Year.

1983: Footballer of Year and Players' Player of Year.

1985: Appointed Liverpool player-manager.

1991: Announced shock resignation in February. Appointed Blackburn manager in October.

1992: Broke British transfer record in July by paying £3.3million to Southampton for Alan Shearer.

1994: Broke transfer record for second time by paying £5million to Norwich for Chris Sutton in July.

1995: Steered Blackburn to first championship for 81 years. Became Blackburn's director of football, with assistant Ray Harford taking over as manager.

1996: Left Blackburn by mutual consent. In December, appointed business development manager for Rangers chairman David Murray's company Carnegie Sports International.

1997: Succeeded Kevin Keegan as Newcastle manager. Newcastle beat Barcelona in the Champions League at St James' Park, but league form nosedives. Newcastle survive after being sucked into a relegation dog-fight, but Dalglish ends the season leading the Magpies out at Wembley for the FA Cup final, which

they lose 2-0 to Arsenal.

1998: Dalglish's pre-season signings include French World Cup-winning striker Stephane Guivarc'h, Peruvian Nolberto Solano, and Greek international George Georgiadis. Newcastle can only draw 0-0 at home to 10-man Charlton in the Premiership opener at St James' Park. Dalglish wakes up to back page newspaper headlines predicting he will be replaced as manager by Ruud Gullit.

Launches a failed bid to buy out chief executive Fergus McCann's stake in former club Celtic with Simple Minds singer Jim Kerr.

1999: Spends the rest of the season concentrating on media work, appointed director of football operations by Celtic on June 10.

Dalglish honours

With Celtic

1972: League champions, Scottish Cup winners.

1973: League champions.

1974: League champions, Scottish Cup winners.

1975: Cup winners, League Cup winners.

1977: League champions, Cup winners.

Playing record with Celtic: 324 matches, 167 goals.

With Liverpool

1978: European Cup winners.

1979: League champions.

1980: League champions.

1981: European Cup winners, League Cup winners.

1982: League champions, League Cup winners.

1983: League champions, League Cup winners.

1984: League champions, European Cup winners, League Cup winners.

1986 (as player-manager): League champions, FA Cup winners.

Playing record with Liverpool: 515 matches, 173 goals.

1988 (as manager): League champions.

1989: FA Cup winners.

1990: League champions.

With Blackburn:

1992: Won promotion to top flight.

1994: Premiership runners-up.

1995: Premiership champions.

With Newcastle:

1998: FA Cup runners-up.

International record

Scotland: 102 matches (national record), 30 goals (national record shared with Denis Law).



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Manager ISA NSW on 9629 1800 or 0414 430 047

those supporters can now forget all about the agony of the last few months and focus firmly on the future - one which he is convinced is more promising than ever.

But he also warned despite the major face-lift behind the scenes, only when the Hoops begin to get it right on the pitch can they truly be satisfied - and as far as he is concerned that means a major reshuffle of the playing staff.

He added: "This is a good lift, but there still has to be a lot to happen yet. Celtic need a few players without a shadow of a doubt."

"Let's get people here, who like Kenny and Allan MacDonald know precisely just how big this football club is and exactly what it's all about."

"As I say, it's great having him come back, but as far as the fans are concerned, getting players in who are going to bring the glory days back to the club is the crucial factor."

"But this is certainly a step in the right direction and hopefully the team will revert to winning ways as soon as possible."

"It has been talked about for a long time but it's no less of a boost for that."

And the arrival of living legends Kenny Dalglish and John Barnes at Celtic could resurrect Alan Stubbs' Parkhead career.

The Scottish Cup final defeat at the hands of Old Firm rivals Rangers was expected to be the unsettled defender's last game

'Stress' problems, Spain, Spurs, Spitting and now a no-go hairdresser visa – problems continue to hunt King Kenny's

By Simon Stone,
Simon Buckland
and Tony Kelshaw

CELTIC fans have urged the club to dump bad-Bhoy Mark Viduka after he admitted it would be "a dream" to play for Tottenham.

In an Australian television interview, Viduka claimed he had been the subject of a £5million bid from Spurs.

The Aussie striker said he was flattered by Spurs' apparent interest - which has since been denied by the Premiership side - and added: "It's every footballer's dream to play for a club like Tottenham."

Viduka's comments have outraged the Celtic fans, who stood by the errant 23-year-old when he refused to link up with the Parkhead club immediately after his move from Croatia Zagreb in December.

He ended the season in disgrace after being sent off for spitting at an opponent against Dunfermline last month and, according to Peter Rafferty,

chairman of the Affiliation of Celtic Supporters' Clubs, the latest incident should signal the end of his 11-match Hoops career.

"It is a disgrace," said Rafferty. "When you consider the amount of games he has played and the trouble he has already caused, mindless comments like this only confirm the belief that he never wanted to play for us anyway."

"Bearing in mind both clubs have denied any contact, it seems Mark is a bit of a Walter Mitty-type character."

"There seems to be no truth behind them at all and he just believes the first thing he thinks when he wakes up in the morning."

"I am sure the club will have their own views about what to do with him but if he is still with Celtic at the start of next season, he may have some problems trying to win the fans over a second time."

Rafferty insisted that with Britain's highest average attendance of almost 60,000, Celtic could claim to be a bigger club than Tottenham.

And he used Viduka's strike partner Henrik Larsson as the perfect example of what was expected of a player pulling on the famous green and white jersey.

"Henrik is a far better player - a top-class goalscorer who has proved his worth to this club," said Rafferty.

"He is a regular international and has re-signed for us for another four years."

"Unlike Viduka, he has delivered for us on the pitch and knows exactly what Celtic means to the supporters."

"Tottenham Hotspur is not

bigger or better than Celtic and if he doesn't know that by now he never will."

"In trying circumstances, the fans got behind him when he eventually recovered from the tiredness, which stopped him joining us originally."

"They tried to help him settle and gave him every encouragement."

"But for Viduka to fly halfway across the world then upset everybody with his crass comments is ridiculous."

"He doesn't appear to have any respect for the club and I can't see many people showing too much respect for him."

And reports linking Celtic striker Mark Viduka with a £5million move to Spurs have been quashed by the player's agent Bernie Mandic.

Mandic said: "There really is no story. It's just something the Australian press picked up on from an old story in a Scottish newspaper from two months ago."

"Mark did an hour long interview with one of the networks and this story was touched upon for about two minutes."

"Mark said that if the rumours had been true he'd have been flattered and that anyone would like to play for a big club like Tottenham."

"But until several reporters rang me, we knew nothing about the story resurfacing."

"Unless the two clubs are doing some sort of deal between themselves then nothing is happening."

"I'm Mark's manager and if something was happening then I would know about it."

Viduka, in a television interview in Melbourne had indeed said a switch to the Premiership is an option he would consider.

When asked about Tottenham, he said: "It's a good club and I'm flattered they've offered that sort of money for me."

"It's every footballer's dream to play for a club like Tottenham. I suppose that's between the two clubs to decide and if something happens, that's good, but if it doesn't, I'm easy."

Martin Jolly, managing director of the IMG agency which handles Viduka's affairs, said leading clubs are bound to be interested in the forward.

He said: "There is no question he is a player that would be targeted and will continue to be targeted. It is no surprise that someone would make an offer to him because he is that kind of player, but we cannot confirm anything concrete at this stage."

A Celtic spokesman responded, however, by insisting: "The club has received no

BAD BHOY



approach from any football club regarding an offer for Mark Viduka."

And Tottenham joined forces with the Glasgow giants in denying that a fee has been agreed between the two clubs.

A Spurs spokesman said: "As Celtic will readily confirm, we have not contacted them over Viduka."

Viduka's protracted £3million arrival from Croatia Zagreb saw him initially sign in December, but not make his first start for the Parkhead club until the March 8 Scottish Cup tie at Morton.

The Australian international struck twice in that game to spark a run of eight goals in his first seven Celtic appearances, although he looked out of sorts in the title decider with Rangers on May 2.

The following week at Dunfermline he was red-carded for spitting at home midfielder Marc Millar, with furious Celtic officials forcing the player into a public apology for his actions.

An ankle injury collected in the same game meant that East End Park clash was to be Viduka's last of the campaign, leaving him with a total of just 11 games for Celtic.

Earlier this year, Viduka hinted of ambitions away from Celtic Park when he spoke of a desire to play in Spanish football and has recently been unsettled by his Croatian girlfriend Ivana experiencing work permit difficulties.

His girlfriend does not qualify for a British work permit.

The Celtic striker, who blamed mental problems when

he went AWOL just two days after his £4 million transfer in December, has urged the club to help persuade the Government to cut through red tape and allow Croatian beauty Ivana Husidic to resume her hairdressing career.

But the Department of Employment has confirmed to Record Sport that Ivana cannot be given a permit unless she and Viduka are married.

The news will come as a massive blow to Viduka, who had hoped that new Celtic chief executive Allan MacDonald would be able to solve a problem which Parkhead insiders fear could cause their striker further unrest.

Mandic added: "The situation is far from ideal but Mark doesn't want to make any comment at this stage."

"He feels he has been involved in enough controversy and he is leaving this matter in the hands of Celtic."

"He has spoken to Mr MacDonald who is very understanding and Mark's happy to leave this in his hands."

However, MacDonald is fighting a battle that he cannot win as, under Government rules, hairdressers do not qualify for work permits.

A club insider said: "Mark has spoken to us about this because it is causing problems at home."

"Ivana does not have many friends in Scotland and she was hoping to meet new people when she started work."

"She's spent most of her time stuck in the house and Mark knows she isn't happy."

Run home to start hotting up

by Patrick Galloway

WITH the competition resting over the long weekend, we're edging closer and closer to the finals of the New South Wales Super League.

Things are currently looking quite congested on the NSW Super League ladder, with no less than eight sides battling it out for a position in the finals.

Blacktown currently lead the league on 44 points, sitting four points clear of nearest challengers Bonnyrigg, who are a further six points clear of third placed Macarthur with a game in hand.

As we move down the ladder things become a little denser. No less than four sides then follow - being separated by just two points.

Leichhardt are the best of them on 32, while Bankstown, Fairfield and Canterbury -Marrickville are just one point behind, all tied on 31.

The Parramatta Eagles are sitting quietly on 29, with a game in hand.

Blacktown still will have their work cut out in getting the minor premiership.

Their remanding matches see them pitted against Bankstown (h), Fairfield (a) and Parramatta (h).

All sides that are in contention at this late stage of the season and will take some beating.

Although with a four point advantage over second placed Bonnyrigg - the only team that can realistically be challenging for the minor

premiership, Blacktown are looking safe.

This becomes increasingly apparent upon examining their rivals run home.

Bonnyrigg will be taking on Leichhardt (h), Ryde (h), and Canterbury (a).

There stands some very difficult opposition in both Leichhardt and Canterbury Marrickville, and without Colin Luff for the rest of the season - things aren't looking all that great for Bonnyrigg.

The real race for the

finals is set to occur down towards the middle of the ladder, where Parramatta, Canterbury, Bankstown, Fairfield, Leichhardt and Bankstown all have difficult runs in.

The best of this bunch looks to be Parramatta, who are up against Sutherland (a), Central Coast (h) and then Blacktown (a).

At least six points should come to fruition in this instance for Parramatta, and with an excellent goal differ-

ence - currently 16, Parramatta are looking red-light specials to reach the next stage of the competition along with Blacktown, Bonnyrigg and Macarthur.

Fifth position could fall to any one of a number of sides, although if it were based on consistency we would have to lean towards Leichhardt, currently in outright 4th position. Leichhardt's final three games sees them matched up against Bonnyrigg (h), Bankstown (a) and Fairfield (h).

A difficult run home but none-the-less one that the lads from Leichhardt could surely handle.

All in all it will be a fiery remanding three rounds in the New South Wales Super League, indicative of the tightness of the competition this season.

Let's just hope that the great competition continues as we move into the next stage of the Super League in four weeks.

AND Mark Fowler highlights the catch-up matches played; It was a rare quiet weekend in Super League, with it originally being left free.

Despite that though three games were played, all of them re-arranged games from previously washed-out games.

On Sunday Eastern

Suburbs secured a rare win after defeating Ryde City 1-0 at Wentworth Park. Peter Pullicino, who scored goals with a flurry at the start of the season but hasn't netted for some time, scored after 67 minutes in what could be a vital win for the Wanderers.

Even better for their point of view was they moved a point clear of the Central Coast, who went down 2-0 at home to the Parramatta Eagles.

Striker Adam Anderson notched his ninth of the season for the Eagles and the youngster only

came into the side nearly halfway through the season.

Defender Paul O'Grady sealed the points for the Eagles, with a goal after 54 minutes.

It looks like the fate of the two bottom clubs could come down to the very last game of the season, when the Coasties take on Eastern Suburbs.

The Eagles meantime went back into fourth, although Fairfield could go above them depending on the result of Monday's game.

The Macarthur Rams took on the Fairfield Bulls yesterday (Monday) looking for a win to keep them clear in second place.

The Rams though have been rocked by the shock resignation of coach Casey de Bruin, so stand-in Martin Bourke, who is being assisted by Richard Lloyd and John Crawley, will be looking to fire his charges up.

With three rounds to go and all issues still to be decided, it looks like being a fascinating last three rounds in the 1999 Super League campaign!



NSW Super League competition: the league is back in full flight after the holiday weekend recess

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE

Sunday June 13

Central Coast v Parramatta Eagles

Pluim Park, 3:00pm

(rd 10 re-arranged match)

Eastern Suburbs v Ryde City

Wentworth Park, 3:00pm

(rd 16 re-arranged match)

Monday June 14

Macarthur Rams v Fairfield Bulls

Lynwood Park, 3:00pm

(rd 18 re-arranged match)

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Bankstown Lions coach

EURO 2000

Czechs make it mate with win over Scotland

By Mike Collett

THE Czech Republic became the first country to qualify for next year's European Championship soccer finals after recovering from a 2-0 deficit to beat Scotland 3-2 in a group nine qualifier in Prague on Wednesday.

The Czechs, beaten finalists in Euro 96, clinched first place in their group by reaching a maximum 21 points from seven matches - a total none of the chasing pack can catch.

The winners of the nine qualifying groups and the best placed runner-up are guaranteed an automatic place in the finals along with joint-hosts Belgium and the Netherlands.

The eight other runners-up then play-off for the four remaining spots.

But the Czechs lived dangerously before booking their ticket to the Netherlands.

They went behind to goals scored by Paul Ritchie and Allan Johnston before hitting back through Tomas Repka, Pavel Kuka and Jan Koller late in the match.

Scotland, which looked as if it was about to bounce back from the previous Saturday's

shock 1-1 draw with the Faroe Islands, remained second after Estonia lost 2-1 to Lithuania and the Faroes again pulled off a shock, drawing 2-2 with Bosnia in Tofir.

With the Czechs clear on 21 points, Scotland lead the scramble for second place with eight points, the same tally as both Bosnia and Lithuania.

Estonia has seven points. Poland, which has never appeared in the European Championship, boosted its chances with a 3-2 win over Luxembourg while England could only draw 1-1 in Bulgaria.

The Polish result, together with a disappointing draw for England against a Bulgarian side reduced to 10-men for the last 30 minutes in Sofia, favoured Poland in group five.

Sweden, which did not play on Wednesday, led the group with 13 points from five matches, followed by Poland, 12 from six and England nine from six.

Romania also took a huge step to ensuring its place in the play-offs with a 4-0 thumping of Azerbaijan in group seven.

Romania now has 17 points

from its seven matches - six points clear of third placed Slovakia which won 1-0 in Hungary.

Portugal, which crushed Liechtenstein 8-0, was top of the section with 18 points and was also certain to finish either first or second.

Joao Pinto scored a hat-trick to lead the rout in front of 25,000 at Coimbra.

There was nearly a major upset with tiny Andorra making world champion France fight all the way for a 1-0 win in the game played at Barcelona's Olympic Stadium.

France, beaten 3-2 at home by Russia on Saturday, scored a late penalty through Frank Leboeuf in a game marred by the sendings-off of France's Christophe Dugarry after only 24 minutes and Andorran Tony Lima six minutes from time.

The result lifted France into second place in group four on 14 points, behind leader Ukraine which drew 0-0 in Armenia while Russia moved into contention with a 1-0 win over Iceland in Moscow - Iceland's first defeat in 11 matches.

With seven matches played Ukraine has 15 points, France

14, Russia 12 and Iceland 12.

In group one, Italy stayed top despite being held to a 0-0 draw by Switzerland in Lausanne, but Denmark revived its hopes with a 2-0 win over Wales in Liverpool.

Italy has 14 points from six matches, followed by Denmark on eight, Switzerland on seven and Wales out of it on six.

Niall Quinn scored the second half winner as Ireland downed Macedonia 1-0 - a result which lifted the side to top of the section on nine points ahead of Macedonia (7), Croatia (7) and Yugoslavia (6).

But Ireland's campaign could yet be derailed if UEFA decide to penalise the country for its government refusing to allow Yugoslavia into the country for last Saturday's group eight qualifier in Dublin.

**FULL
COLLATED
RESULTS ON
PAGE 23**

So near and yet so far for tiny Andorra

By Phil Minshull

A 1-0 defeat would normally not be cause for celebration but Andorra's narrow loss to France in their European championship qualifier last Wednesday was hailed in every corner of the tiny Pyrenean principality.

"I am incredibly proud of our players," the Andorran head of government, Marc Forné, commented.

"When you think that one of the French players could cost as much as a quarter of our national budget, it is a testament to what we have achieved."

The match was played in Barcelona's Montjuic Olympic, a four-hour drive away, because Andorra's own stadium only has a capacity of 1,250.

"I think this is the greatest day in our short history," Andorran Football Federation president Francesco Vila said.

"I remember the night last year when we were only beaten 2-0 by France in Saint-

Denis and that was a great feeling. This is even better.

"We were close to achieving a miracle and I'm sure I'll be thinking about this game for a long time to come," Vila added.

Andorra were denied a draw with the world champions only by a Frank Leboeuf penalty five minutes from time.

"Oh, but for that penalty," the Andorran daily *Diari d'Andorra* lamented on its front page.

Radio Nacional d'Andorra commentator Gabriel Fernandez brought a touch of perspective to the euphoria after the match.

"We walked on a knife edge throughout the match. With 10 men in defence there was always the possibility something like this was going to happen.

"It would have been no surprise if there had been a first half penalty but to lose one just five minutes from time was just so cruel," Fernandez said.

KEEGAN WON'T WALK

By Mark Bradley

KEVIN Keegan insists that he will not quit even if England do not make it to the Euro 2000 finals. Keegan has now come to the end of the four-match period after which he had initially claimed that he would bow out and return to Fulham.

He has since changed his mind and signed a three-year contract to take charge of England until after the 2002 World Cup finals.

And even the setbacks of the past week, coupled with the first real criticism of his tactical abilities and the realisation that there are "only about 25 names who are really England quality" in the entire country, have not altered his thinking.

For despite their hapless displays against Sweden and Bulgaria, England can still qualify for the Euro 2000 play-offs by beating both Luxembourg and Poland in September.

Keegan said: "The place and time for any debate about my future is after the next two games but of course I am staying on if we don't qualify for Euro 2000."

Some critics believe he could simply walk away from the job if the personal criticism becomes too great but he

insisted: "There is no way I would not stay on."

"I would like to try and see it through but if the Football Association have a different view two years down the line and I'm not allowed to then that is a different thing."

"But I'm going to give this my very best shot. I can see the frustration in the job but I knew about that before I took over. The last two games were very poor but at least things are still in our own hands to qualify. You don't normally get too many chances if you don't produce the goods but fortunately we still have one."

Keegan acknowledges that the route ahead of his side is "tough and fraught with danger" but he insists that he does not have any regrets about failing to wait until the end of his first four matches before deciding his long-term future.

"I knew I could do that but it was never going to happen. It would never have been fair to leave someone else in this position of needing to win two games to qualify. I would have felt responsible for where England were at this point and it would have been like me saying it was not hunky-dory when I took over and it's not hunky-dory for the next man. I don't think

that would have been right."

Meanwhile, he was also adamant in refuting suggestions that he had found his working relationship with FA technical director Howard Wilkinson to be "stifling".

Wilkinson, the former Leeds boss, clearly has massive power within the FA and heads the development programme for young players.

He also has an input into the England set-up, was seen as the man behind the sacking of under-21 coach Peter Taylor and some have wondered whether he is treading on Keegan's toes.

However, the England head coach insisted: "Let me make this clear - Howard has been a tremendous help, he is fully on board and has never done anything that I have not asked him to do. He does a lot of preparation, scouting and the like because that is in his domain and it could not have been done any more professionally."

"Any input from him when he sits in the stand at Wembley is fine because the game looks different from there. He and I have different agendas and I'm not a fool - if there is some advice on offer I will take it. But I pick the team and nobody interferes. Blame me because the buck stops here."



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Shoalhaven City v Woonona

Ison Park, South Nowra

Arise, Sir Alex; the guru of Manchester United

IT'S Sir Alex from now on. Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson has received a knighthood in the Queen's honours list. Ferguson, the 57-year-old Scot who led Manchester United to an unprecedented league, F.A. Cup and European Champions Cup this season, was a late addition to the list.

Prime Minister Tony Blair added Ferguson's name to the list after United won the Champions Cup in a 2-1 come-from-behind win over Bayern Munich last month.

A former shipyard worker in Glasgow, Ferguson has won 12 major trophies since joining Manchester United 13 years ago: five league titles, four F.A. Cups, one League

Cup, one Cup Winners Cup and the European Champions Cup. The day after the victory over Bayern Munich, the Queen sent him a personal message.

"Congratulations on your splendid win last night. It was a magnificent achievement, rounding off such an unforgettable season for you all."

And Sir Alex said he was delighted at being knighted by the British government.

"I am delighted and honoured. I see this as an honour, not just for me, but for the people who have supported me through my life and made me what I am," Ferguson said.

"Manchester United's success is not just down to me but to the players who have to deliver on the pitch and to the

people at Old Trafford, past and present, who have made it the greatest football club in the world."

Scottish-born Ferguson, 57, is the longest-serving manager in England's premier league.

He started at Manchester United in 1986 and last month became the first manager to achieve the treble of the English premiership title, FA Cup and European Cup.

Manchester United assistant chief executive Peter Kenyon said: "I couldn't think of a more befitting way to end what has been an unbelievable season."

Sources close to the manager said the players would continue to call Ferguson "boss" rather than Sir Alex on the training ground.



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Sir Bob welcomes Sir Eck to the exclusive club

By David Anderson

SIR Bobby Charlton is delighted to welcome Sir Alex Ferguson to the select band of football knights.

The Manchester United boss is only the eighth manager or player to be knighted, and Sir Bobby said the honour was well deserved.

Sir Bobby, who is a United director, said: "It's right that he should be honoured in this way and I'm really pleased for him."

"He certainly deserves it without question for all that he has contributed to the game over the years."

"He has been a fantastic success as a manager and he's had a wonderful career, which, of course, isn't finished yet."

"He's the best at his job and he has contributed so much to the game."

"He has improved the game

many, many years ago," he said.

"Without question he laid the foundations of what you

Govan with his brother Martin, who is United's European scout, and during that time he learned the values that have

and he played for Queen's Park and St Johnstone before he turned professional with Dunfermline in 1964.

He went on to play centre-forward for his beloved Glasgow Rangers, although he is the first to admit he was always something of a journeyman pro.

But again his experiences as a player helped shape him as a manager later in life.

"I wasn't a particularly successful footballer, although I thought I was a good player in a team and scored goals," he said.

"But I never won the things I wanted to win and that shaped me."

"You get an opportunity to do something about yourself as a manager."

Ferguson got his first break in management with East Stirling in 1974 before he moved on to St Mirren after three months.

Paisley was not exactly the most glamorous town and Ferguson recalled: "It was a desolate place and even the birds woke up coughing."

However, it was all part of Ferguson's learning curve, which was becoming steeper with each passing season.

This became evident in 1977 when he tasted glory for the first time as a manager when he led St Mirren to the Scottish First Division title.

Despite this success, Ferguson fell foul of the St Mirren board and he was sacked in 1978.

Typically, Ferguson bounced back and the same year he succeeded Billy McNeill at Aberdeen to lead the Pittodrie club to their most glorious era.

He revolutionised Scottish football as he broke the stranglehold of Rangers and Celtic during his eight-year reign.

In all, he won a staggering three titles, four Scottish Cups, one Scottish League Cup and his crowning glory of the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1983 when Aberdeen defeated the mighty Real Madrid in the final.

In 1984 he was also awarded the OBE for his services to football.

Ferguson was the best manager north of the border and he was the obvious choice to coach Scotland at the 1986 World Cup Finals following the sudden death of Jock Stein.

His list of admirers was growing and by the autumn of 1986 they included Manchester United who had just sacked Ron Atkinson.

On November 6 he accepted



see now and he was one of the greatest managers of all time and a terrific person.

"You always concern yourself with trying to maintain that success - not trying to be someone."

"It doesn't matter who the manager is at a given time, who's won something, it's the tradition of the club that you're trying to protect."

"So as you progress through this job, you try to follow in the manner in which he did."

"Part of that was adventure and he always played courageous teams who tried to win matches."

"So you get sort of engrained into the fabric of that idea of his."

"When you see Manchester United play you see that very thing."

"We've always tried to win our matches in the period of time I've been here."

And it is maybe no coincidence that Alex Ferguson's mobile phone plays 'Scotland the Brave' when it rings.

Few people are more proud of their roots than the newly-knighted manager of Manchester United, who has been dubbed a professional Scotsman.

Ferguson was brought up in a working-class family in the tough Glasgow suburb of

guided him throughout his life.

It was in those backstreets that he was taught the importance of discipline, loyalty, family and self-respect.

The fiercely-competitive Ferguson has remembered those lessons throughout his hugely-successful career.

It was significant that during his finest moment in Barcelona last month when he finally lifted the European Cup he paid tribute to his roots.

"I'm proud of my family and my heritage and all that they have given me," he declared.

His career is the archetypal rags to riches story of the bairn from the backstreets who grew up to become the finest manager the British game has ever known.

Before he became a footballer Ferguson had followed his father into the shipyard and it was there he developed his legendary Stakhanovite work ethic and his strong Socialist beliefs.

"When we were brought up you had to get to work on time, work hard or you would not have a job," he said.

"Your father kept your feet on the ground and a clip round the ear didn't do you any harm."

Ferguson combined his job as a toolmaker with football

Profile

SIR ALEX FERGUSON FACTFILE

1941: Born December 31, 1941 in Govan, Glasgow.
 1957: Joined Queens Park as amateur while apprentice tool-maker in Glasgow factory.
 1960: Joined St Johnstone as part-timer.
 1964: Quit toolmaking and joined Dunfermline.
 1967: Moved to Rangers for £65,000.
 1969: Another move, this time to Falkirk, for £20,000.
 1973: Joined Ayr, returning to part-time ranks while running his Glasgow pub.
 1974: Appointed manager of East Stirling in September, but moved to St Mirren three months later.
 1978: Sacked by St Mirren and appointed at Aberdeen as successor to Billy McNeill.
 1980: First managerial honour when Aberdeen win Scottish championship.
 1982: Aberdeen win the Scottish Cup beating Rangers 4-1.
 1983: Aberdeen retain Scottish Cup this time beating Rangers 1-0 and defeating Real Madrid 2-1 in Gothenburg to lift European Cup Winners' Cup.
 1984: Aberdeen win League and Cup double beating Celtic 2-1 in the Cup final. Ferguson awarded OBE.
 1985: Appointed caretaker manager of Scotland following death of Jock Stein during Wales v Scotland World Cup qualifier.
 1986: Scotland bow out of Mexico World Cup after first round. Ferguson leaves Aberdeen to take over at Manchester United after sacking of Ron Atkinson.
 1990: First trophy at Old Trafford as United beat Crystal Palace 1-0 in an FA Cup final replay after a 2-2 draw.
 1991: United beat Barcelona 2-1 in Rotterdam to win Cup Winners' Cup.
 1992: European Super Cup arrives at Old Trafford as United beat Red Star Belgrade, while first League Cup triumph booked with 1-0 defeat of Nottingham Forest. Championship dream dies as Leeds overhaul United in final weeks of the season.
 1993: Old Trafford's 26-year wait for title is ended as United finish 10 points clear of Aston Villa.
 1994: United become only fourth team this century, and sixth in total, to complete championship and FA Cup Double. The Old Trafford club defeated Chelsea 4-0 in the FA Cup final.
 1995: United finish runners-up to Blackburn in the league and Everton in the FA Cup.
 1996: United become the first club ever to complete the championship and FA Cup Double twice, overcoming one-time runaway leaders Newcastle in the Premiership and then beating Liverpool 1-0 at Wembley.

1997: Sets his sights on emulating Sir Matt Busby by lifting the European Cup, but United are beaten in semi-finals by Borussia Dortmund. Pain eased by fourth championship in five seasons.
 1998: Most disappointing season in recent years with no trophies won. Domestic challenge thwarted by defeats to eventual Double winners Arsenal, and failure once again in the European Cup, going out to unfancied Monaco in the quarter-finals.
 1999: Leads United to the Treble - Champions' Cup, Premiership and FA Cup.
 May - Signs a new deal keeping him at Old Trafford until 2002.
 June 11 - Knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

Honours:

Player:

Scottish youth international.

Manager:

With Aberdeen: Scottish Championship 1979-80, 1983-84, 1984-85; Scottish Cup winners 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986; Scottish League Cup 1986; European Cup Winners' Cup 1983. With Manchester United: Premiership champions 1992-93, 1993-94, 1995-96, 1996-97; FA Cup winners 1990, 1994, 1996; League Cup winners 1992; European Cup Winners' Cup winners 1991; European Super Cup winners 1991.

the biggest challenge of his life to revive the fortunes of the perennial underachievers.

Five managers had tried in vain to return United to the halcyon days of Sir Matt Busby.

Ferguson, though, had the confidence to succeed where they had failed because of his roots.

"Scotsmen who leave the country have a great sense of pride about who they are, particularly coming to England," he said.

"They want to do well and there is a sense of duty to do well for your country and yourself."

He never lost faith in himself even in the dark days of 1989 when some fans called for his head.

He remained confident that he could succeed and his belief was borne out when he led

United to FA Cup glory in 1990.

Although few realised it then, that success launched United's domination of the 1990s as they eclipsed all their rivals.

In all Ferguson, 57, has won five Premiership crowns, four FA Cups, one League Cup and one European Cup Winners' Cup before he captured his Holy Grail of the Champions League to complete an historic Treble.

Ferguson, who has just signed a three-year contract worth £5million, admits nothing will top that achievement during his last three years in the job.

He even claims he will take things a bit easier next season.

"Until we lose our first game that is and then it will be tea-cup time," he said.

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Collated Euro championship qualifying results/standings

Group 1

Switzerland 0 Italy 0
Wales 0 Denmark 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Italy	6	4	2	0	11	2	14
Denmark	6	2	2	2	6	5	8
Switzerland	5	2	2	1	4	3	8
Wales	6	2	0	4	5	13	6
Belarus	5	0	2	3	3	6	2

Remaining matches:

Sept 4 Belarus v Wales
Denmark v Switzerland
Sept 8 Switzerland v Belarus
Italy v Denmark
Oct 9 Wales v Switzerland
Belarus v Italy

Group 2

Albania 0 Slovenia 1
Greece 1 Latvia 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Norway	7	5	1	1	14	8	16
Slovenia	6	3	2	1	8	6	11
Latvia	7	3	2	2	7	5	11
Greece	7	2	3	2	8	7	9
Georgia	7	1	1	5	4	12	4
Albania	6	0	3	3	3	6	3

Remaining matches:

Aug 18 Slovenia v Albania
Sept 4 Norway v Greece
Albania v Latvia
Slovenia v Georgia
Sept 8 Greece v Albania
Norway v Slovenia
Georgia v Latvia

Oct 9 Albania v Georgia
Slovenia v Greece
Latvia v Norway

Group 3

Moldova 0 Finland 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Germany	5	4	0	1	14	3	12
Turkey	5	4	0	1	11	5	12
Finland	6	2	1	3	8	10	7
North Ireland	5	1	2	2	3	8	5
Moldova	7	0	3	4	6	16	3

Remaining matches:

Sept 4 Finland v Germany
N Ireland v Turkey
Sept 8 Germany v N Ireland
Moldova v Turkey
Oct 9 Germany v Turkey
Finland v N Ireland

Group 4

Andorra 0 France 1
Russia 1 Iceland 0
Armenia 0 Ukraine 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Ukraine	7	4	3	0	12	3	15
France	7	4	2	1	11	6	14
Russia	7	4	0	3	17	10	12
Iceland	7	3	3	1	7	3	12
Armenia	7	1	2	4	3	10	5
Andorra	7	0	0	7	2	20	0

Remaining matches:

Sept 4 Ukraine v France
Iceland v Andorra
Russia v Armenia
Sept 8 Andorra v Russia
Iceland v Ukraine

Oct 9 Armenia v France
France v Iceland
Russia v Ukraine
Andorra v Armenia

Group 5

Luxembourg 2 Poland 3
Bulgaria 1 England 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Sweden	5	4	1	0	6	1	13
Poland	6	4	0	2	12	6	12
England	6	2	3	1	8	4	9
Bulgaria	6	1	2	3	3	7	5
Luxembourg	5	0	0	5	2	13	0

Remaining matches:

Sept 4 Sweden v Bulgaria
England v Luxembourg
Sept 8 Luxembourg v Sweden
Poland v England
Oct 9 Sweden v Poland
Oct 10 Bulgaria v Luxembourg

Group 7

Hungary 0 Slovakia 1
Portugal 8 Liechtenstein 0
Romania 4 Azerbaijan 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Portugal	7	6	0	1	27	2	18
Romania	7	5	2	0	16	1	17
Slovakia	7	3	2	2	8	4	11
Hungary	7	2	2	3	11	7	8
Azerbaijan	7	1	0	6	5	21	3
Liechtenstein	7	1	0	6	2	34	3

Remaining matches:

Sept 3 Azerbaijan v Portugal
Sept 4 Slovakia v Romania
Liechtenstein v Hun-

Sept 8 Romania v Portugal
Slovakia v Liechten-

stein

Oct 9 Hungary v Azerbaijan
Liechten. v Romania
Azerbaijan v Slovakia
Oct 10 Portugal v Hungary

Group 8

Ireland 1 Macedonia 0
Yugoslavia 4 Malta 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Yugoslavia	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
Ireland	4	3	0	1	8	1	9
Macedonia	5	2	1	2	9	6	7
Croatia	4	2	1	1	8	6	7
Malta	6	0	0	6	3	22	0

Remaining matches:

Aug 18 Yugoslavia v Croatia
Sept 4 Croatia v Ireland
Yugoslavia v Macedo-
nia
Sept 8 Malta v Ireland
Macedonia v Yugosla-
via
Oct 10 Croatia v Yugoslavia

TBA

Macedonia v Ireland
Croatia v Malta
Ireland v Yugoslavia

Group 9

Estonia 1 Lithuania 2
Faroe Is 2 Bosnia 2
Czech 3 Scotland 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Czech Rep	7	7	0	0	17	5	21
Scotland	6	2	2	2	9	9	8
Lithuania	7	2	2	3	7	9	8
Bosnia	6	2	2	2	9	10	8
Estonia	7	2	1	4	12	13	7
Faroe Is	7	0	3	4	4	12	3

Remaining matches:

Aug 18 Scotland v Bosnia
Sept 4 Bosnia v Scotland
Faroe Islands v Estonia
Lithuania v Czech
Sept 8 Czech v Bosnia
Faroe Is v Lithuania
Estonia v Scotland
Oct 9 Estonia v Bosnia
Czech v Faroe Islands
Scotland v Lithuania

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The Back Page

STOP PRESS

South Melbourne looking to samba

REPRESENTING Australia in front of packed crowds in Brazil will be sufficient incentive for Australian champion South Melbourne to lift in the world club soccer championship.

Brazil was last week named the host country for the inaugural championship between January 5-14.

South coach Ang Postecoglou said winning the Ericsson Cup for the third successive time was the club's priority but the Federations Cup was a handy bonus.

South, the Australian champion, still has to qualify for the finals but should face little opposition from the regional sides when it plays off against the regions champions in Fiji in October.

"It will be a great experience especially playing in a soccer country like Brazil, but we still have to get there," Postecoglou said.

"If we are representing Australia we will be going there prepared and we will going to Brazil to be competitive," he said.

The coach is likely to extend his squad for the world championship but will not start preparing for the new season any earlier.

The championship will give South Melbourne the chance to play against the world's best.

However, there is doubt that European Cup holder Manchester United will contest the series due to an already congested fixture list.



Angie Postecoglou: looking to represent Australia in Brazil with his Blues

TORINO and Verona earned re-admission to the Italian Serie A after winning their next-to-last matches of second-division play.

With the victories, Verona and Torino held the two top spots in the overall standings and got automatic promotion to the highest division.

Torino, the crosstown rival of Juventus, has a record of seven Serie A titles.

Verona won its only first-division title in 1985.

The four newcomers from the Serie B will replace Empoli, Vicenza, Sampdoria and Salernitana, which were relegated following the just-concluded Serie A campaign.

World champs to warm up in Ireland

FRANCE coach Roger Lemerre expects better from his world champions when they play Northern Ireland on August 18.

The Belfast friendly has been arranged as a warm-up for France's crucial qualifier against European championship group four leaders Ukraine in Kiev on September 4.

"My players will return in the autumn to face their challenges," Lemerre said on Thursday, the day after his team struggled to beat lightweight Andorra in Barcelona following their shock home defeat by Russia.

"At last the season is over," Lemerre said.

"It has been testing and exhausting. At the end of it,

we're physically tired.

"The performances and the figures are not satisfying."

But Lemerre said motivation was not a problem.

"The (players') ambition has remained intact at the heart of the team.

"The France team have only held the (World Cup) title for a year, give them a break."

HODGSON SET FOR SOCCEROOS TALKS

FORMER Blackburn manager Roy Hodgson is expected to hold talks this week with Soccer Australia bosses over the national team job.

Hodgson was highly impressed with the Australian side after watching them beat his FIFA World Stars 3-2 in an exhibition match to mark the official opening of Sydney's Olympic stadium.

Stars coach Hodgson, who finished the season with a second - and short - spell in charge of troubled Serie A side Inter Milan, said: "It was

a good game for a match of its nature, it was very competitive.

"They (the Australians) would be quite capable of causing teams problems in a European qualifying group, let alone an Oceania qualifying group.

"They were much fitter and much physically stronger than us."

